



## Florida House of Representatives

402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida  
32399-1300

**Johnnie Byrd**  
Speaker

420 The Capitol  
(850) 488-1450

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 19, 2004

Contact: Tom Denham  
(850) 488-1450

### **HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE GIVES HIGH-MARKS TO PRE-KINDERGARTEN BILL**

TALLAHASSEE- The House Committee on Education K-20 approved legislation this week sponsored by Representative Gustavo Barreiro (R- Miami Beach) for the constitutionally-mandated Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program.

“We are obviously very pleased,” said Representative Barreiro. “This bill takes on the challenge of a voluntary pre-k program while maintaining our values of less government, lower taxes, individual freedom, personal responsibility, and empowering families.”

Florida voters approved Amendment 8 in 2002, directing the state to provide a universally-available, voluntary pre-kindergarten program. The substitute to House Bill (HB) 821 approved on Wednesday drives quality in these ways:

- High expectations for quality outcomes
- Quality teachers
- Quality pre-k schools
- Outcomes measured objectively

The bill drives quality outcomes by requiring quality curricula, teachers who can teach and proof of quality by testing.

“We have high expectations,” said co-sponsor Representative Rafael Arza (R-Hialeah). “This gives us realistic means of achieving and measuring outcomes to ensure that we reach those lofty goals. This is not a daycare program. It provides a solid foundation for a quality education.”

The program is flexible but is based on Florida law that requires a net amount of 540 hours of instruction hours for private school kindergarten classes. It includes an option for intensive, full-day 310-hour summer program or the option of a web or book-based program for a parent to help their child at home.

“The bill incorporates the best ideas presented for this program from around the state,” noted Committee Chairwoman Bev Kilmer (R-Quincy). “The level of debate at the committee level is a testament to that, and it has resulted in a bill that holds very strong with the principles and wishes of the people of Florida.”

###